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Enacting Music Through Paratexts:

A Shifting Politics of Interpretation

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Enacting Music Through Paratexts:

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Report

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Abstract

Enacting Music Through Paratexts:
A Shifting Politics of Interpretation

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I engage with paratextual mediation of music through the lens set by Gérard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997). I theorize some of the ways different systems of paratexts shape acts of interpreting a musical text through a series of case studies in musical scores, CDs, and digital music. My final case study considers Spotify as exemplary of the changing conditions surrounding the relationship between text and paratext through Internet technology. Musical texts in Spotify bear a loosened relationship with their interacting paratexts as compared to scores and CDs; whereas a score presentation fixes these paratexts to a musical text by virtue of its materiality, the ways paratexts get attached to digital texts are diverse and highly fluid. Moreover, my case studies highlight the shifting relations of cultural power that lie behind these presentations of music through paratexts. Not all interpreters have the same agency to disseminate music through paratexts; with published scores, a select few hold an inordinate influence to frame interpretation for others in this way. Internet technology furnishes a shift in this cultural power, as more listeners gain more agency to affix

paratexts to music in a way that can shape the listening experiences of others. Spotify presents music through paratexts by drawing on listener data, thereby democratizing a certain portion of this framing power to listeners. Even so, interpretation in Spotify is filtered through the network of technologies and actors representing Spotify's company, who perform a gatekeeping function on musical content through paratexts.

Table of Contents

Introduction

On a dreary Saturday in December, I spend the day at the piano. I recall working on Debussy's *Pour le piano* (1901) as an undergraduate, and decide it is time I return to Debussy's piano music. I pull out my copy of Dover edition's *Claude Debussy: Piano Music (1888-1905)* (1974). The volume comes adorned with Claude Monet's *Impression, Sunrise* (1872) on the front cover, taking me back to my sophomore music history class in which I learned about stylistic correlations between Impressionism and Debussy's music. Upon examining the table of contents, I come across *Rêverie* (1890); a work I have never performed myself, but with which I have a passing familiarity. I flip to the corresponding page and begin reading through *Rêverie* on my piano. As I play through Debussy's work, the evolving emotional atmosphere reminds me of the ebbing and flowing of water depicted in Monet's scene on the cover of the score. This anecdote serves to illustrate how a particular configuration of *paratexts* - provisionally defined as the materials surrounding and presenting a musical text - can impinge on the musical meaning interpreted through them.

In this thesis, I engage with paratextual mediation of music through the lens set by Gérard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997). Genette examines literary paratexts as the liminal processes and pieces of information adorning the text of the work, mediating the communication of the work from the author to the reader. As Genette describes:

> [Although] we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround and extend it, precisely in order

to *present* it…: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its

"reception" and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book.[1]

In analogous fashion, the paratexts of the Dover edition of *Rêverie* present the musical

text to the world, which thereby interact with the text and encourage certain readings and

interpretations by the user.

My paper extends Genette's concept of paratexts to music in order to examine

systems of paratexts that mediate the communication of a musical text. In the first

section, I continue my examination of the Dover edition in order to theorize some of

these interactions between text and paratext, after which I consider two further

presentations of Debussy's *Rêverie*: the work as enacted in the medium of a CD

compilation, and the work as a component of a playlist curated by Spotify. Sections two

and three present case studies of musical meaning through two different systems of

paratexts: score transcriptions, and Spotify. The second section of this paper grounds a

general study of the effects of paratextual mediation in musical scores, which provide a

parallel to Genette's analysis of literary paratexts. The final section of this paper applies

the theories developed through a case study of paratextual mediation in Spotify. Spotify

exemplifies the changing conditions surrounding the relationship between text and

paratext through Internet technology, presenting interesting potentialities and limitations

for musical meaning in digital music.

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[1] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

A common thread throughout this paper is the shifting relations of cultural power that lie behind these presentations of music through paratexts. Not all interpreters have the same agency to attach music to paratexts; with the Dover score, a select few hold an inordinate influence to frame interpretation for others in this way. Although the score transcriptions and the CDs that I examine also furnish a certain shift in this power, the relationship is changing most drastically through Internet technology, through which more listeners gain more agency to affix paratexts to music in a way that can shape the listening experiences of others. Moreover, a score presentation fixes these paratexts to a musical text by virtue of its materiality; by comparison, musical texts in Spotify bear a loosened relationship with their interacting paratexts, as the ways paratexts get attached to digital texts are diverse and highly fluid. Digital music signals a shift in how we can relate to music through paratexts; technology enhances the speed by which our changing interpretations of music can be registered through data, and Spotify presents music through paratexts by drawing on this fluctuating listener data. However, even with these changing conditions surrounding music in Spotify, interpretation is nonetheless filtered through the network of technologies and actors representing Spotify's company, who hold a cultural power to shape the listener's experience of music through paratexts in the streaming service.

Debussy's *Rêverie* as Musical Work?

Though Dover's score may appear natural to the user acculturated to similar score-based traditions, the printing of Debussy's work through such a compilation is not a given condition. *Rêverie* was presented in this volume in the form of a printed score as a result of a publisher's interpretation of Debussy's musical text. As an illustration, consider a rather different instance of a musical score: Friedrich Lindner's *Sacrae cantiones* (1585), an anthology of Renaissance motets that Lindner collected and reassembled. Lindner draws from the single-composer editions in his library in compiling the collection, and emulates them in grouping motets by the same author together. However, this preference is not the only compilation strategy at play, as other ordering strategies often override grouping the texts of a single author. Lindner orders the motets under headings adhering to the church year calendar, beginning his collection with *De navitate et circumcisione domini* for the Nativity, and ending with *Tempore adventus domini* for the Advent (with the appended *Ad placitum* for any general feast day). Within this grouping by social function, the motets are ordered by decreasing number of voices.

For example, Palestrina is represented eight times in the collection, yet none of his texts appear sequentially. Palestrina authored two motets under Lindner's heading *De navitate et circumcisione domini*, but his six-voice motet and his five-voice motet are separated within this section, interpolated by a six-voice motet by Penequini and three motets of five and four voices by Corfini. Palestrina even appears under two different names throughout the collection - for the first three of his motets, he appears as Ioannis Petri Aloysii Praenestini, after which Lindner/the printer switches to Gioanetto Palestrina.

4

Therefore, the paratexts do not present these musical texts as works, as the notion of a musical work as a product of a composer's genius had not yet crystallized in Lindner's time. The ordering of motets by feast days and ensemble holds precedence over any ordering strategies of keeping a single composer's works together, suggesting that the function of the motet was more important than its authorship. The discrepancy in Palestrina's name further undermines an interpretation of these texts as the creative genius of a single artist. As musical text relies on such paratextual materials in order to be perceived, Lindner's collection invites interpretation of these motets through their interaction with the paratexts binding them together, which contextualizes them under notions of church year function and practice. While we are free to translate retroactively the content in the anthology into modern conceptions of musical works, a different interpretive process is required from that implied by the Dover score.

Therefore, Dover participates in the interpretation of Debussy's texts as musical works in presenting them through this volume of scores. Strategies of compiling the various pieces in the edition by way of their composer, and of ordering them by their documented chronology in his lifetime, are supported by this interpretation, and their resulting paratexts informed my own interpretation of *Rêverie* through this edition. Dover's business model is predicated on republishing works that have fallen out of copyright, so commercial strategies related to the original publication dates of these works - and of Monet's public-domain print featured on the cover - also inform the paratexts presenting the edition to the user. Even one's ability to discern Dover's printing of *Rêverie* as music for realization at the piano is advanced by the publisher's paratexts.

5

For example, Dover's signature "Lay Flat Sewn-Binding" stamp on the front cover advertises such an engagement. The back cover explains this use for the score: "[this] book has been designed to be used at the piano. Noteheads are large and clearly printed: margins and spaces are adequate for written notes, fingerings, and turnovers."[2] The typeset of the music would appear to be happenstance rather than intentional, however; in advertising the authority of their edition, the back cover also states: "the music has been reproduced photographically from original or early editions."[3] Still, the materiality of the score embodies these inscribed paratexts, which promotes the advertised use of the edition for the consumer.

Dover's presentation of paratexts is not the only possible means for compiling Debussy's piano music into an edition. The implications of their edition's paratexts become evident when one considers the other options available to the editor. For example, Minkoff Editions published a collection of Debussy's Piano Etudes in 1989. Inside, one does not find the clearly printed noteheads of the Dover edition, but rather a series of facsimiles of Debussy's manuscripts. The notation is barely legible, and does not easily invite a read-through at the piano like the Dover edition. However, in reading the printed introduction by Roy Howat, one discovers that this direct realization is not the aim of this edition:

> The calligraphic beauty characteristic of Debussy's finished manuscripts has
>
> already made some of them an apt subject for facsimile editions. The present

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[2] Back cover to *Claude Debussy: Piano Music (1888-1905)*, by Claude Debussy (New York: Dover Publications, 1974).
[3] *Claude Debussy*, back cover

volume, however, has a different interest, since it reproduces not Debussy's

finished copy but his working draft, replete with revisions.[4]

Howat engaged with these working drafts, Debussy's surviving letters to Jacques Durand

about the *Etudes* in the years 1915-1917, and the resulting printed editions of the works

in compiling the volume. His engagement is evident through the edition's paratexts: the

information in the introduction, the reproduction of Debussy's letters, the manuscript

notation presenting Debussy's music, and the ending citations of the manuscript sources.

By interpreting and disseminating Debussy's texts in this way, the editor provides a

means for the performer to investigate for themselves the "high number of dubious

readings" one may find in the later printed scores of the works.[5] While such an edition

invites certain readings of these texts for the pianist invested in this study, it is unlikely

that one would realize the *Etudes* directly from this edition when faced with the illegible

print and the editorial materials.

Dover has also published the *Etudes* in a different volume in their series of

Debussy's works; namely, *Claude Debussy: Etudes, Children's Corner, Images Book II,

and Other Works for Piano* (1992). This volume too comes adorned with the "Lay Flat

Sewn-Binding," the large, reprinted notation, and the chronological ordering that

similarly present *Rêverie* in their 1974 volume. Unlike Minkoff Editions, Dover presents

Debussy's musical texts through paratexts participating in the shared practices of

interpreting and realizing musical works directly from a publisher's score; practices

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[4] Roy Howat, ed., introduction to *Etudes pour le piano: Fac-similé des esquisses autographes (1915)*, by Claude Debussy (Genève: Éditions Minkoff, 1989), 7.
[5] Howat, introduction, 7.

through which we presently enact musical identity primarily through intersubjective

understandings of the notated symbols in the score as making readily available a musical

content we identify with a composer. Much like the pianist who interprets a work through

the score medium in realizing it, the publisher interprets music in certain ways in

enacting the text through the paratexts presenting a musical work as a score.

Throughout this paper, I engage with the notion of "performing" or "enacting" a

musical text in a way that extends beyond more traditional notions of an instrumentalist's

or a vocalist's musical performance. I draw on Annemarie Mol's article "Ontological

Politics. A Word and Some Questions" (1999) to advance that an enactment of a musical

text is a contextualized interaction between text and actor that organizes musical content

mediated by a specific configuration of paratexts, thereby producing some of the many

co-existing realities of a musical text. In arguing against perspectivism and

constructivism, Mol contends that reality is multiple through our various practices that

shape it:

> Talking about reality as *multiple* depends on another set of metaphors. Not those
> of perspective and construction, but rather those of intervention and performance.
> These suggest a reality that is *done* and *enacted* rather than observed. Rather than
> being seen by a diversity of watching eyes while itself remaining untouched in the
> centre, reality is manipulated by means of various tools in the course of a
> diversity of practices… [Performances] are different *versions* of the object,
> versions that the tools help to enact. They are different and yet related objects.
> They are multiple forms of reality.[6]

In Mol's illustration of anaemia, she cites three types of performances: the clinical, in

which anaemia is the set of symptoms presented by a patient; the statistical, in which

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[6] Annemarie Mol, "Ontological Politics. A Word and Some Questions," *The Sociological Review* 47 (May, 1999): 77.

anaemia is a number to be measured against a standard deviation in a laboratory; and the

pathophysiological, measured against blood levels in each individual. Though these

realities differ from one another, they are not entirely separate:

> What 'multiplicity' entails instead is that, while realities may clash at some points, elsewhere the various performances of an object may *collaborate* and even *depend on* one another… The various anaemias that are performed in medicine have many relations between them. They are not simply opposed to, or outside, one another. One may follow the other, stand in for the other, and, the most surprising image, one may include the other. This means that what is 'other' is also within. Alternative realities don't simply coexist side by side, but are also found inside one another.[7]

In presenting *Rêverie* in *Claude Debussy: Piano Music (1888-1905)*, Dover

performs the musical text by enacting it as a score, which today we understand as an

intermediary from which pianists may realize the text through an instrument. Dover

enacts other realities of the text as well: as a component of a composer's output, as a date

in history, as a reproduction of a documented first edition printing, and as a book that is

the commercial product of the publisher, among others. In enacting these realities of the

text, these paratexts constitute the text, and thereby become a site for further acts of

interpretation on it. Paratexts will not mediate every instance of musical meaning in the

same way; as Genette states: "just as the presence of paratextual elements is not

uniformly obligatory, so, too, the public and the reader are not unvaryingly and uniformly

obligated: no one is required to read a preface (even if such freedom is not always

opportune for the author), and, as we will see, many notes are addressed only to *certain*

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[7] Mol, "Ontological Politics," 83-85.

readers."[8] While a pianist may recognize the notated symbols in the score as inviting their engagement at the piano, a toddler may instead see the pages of *Rêverie* as a surface to be defaced by their hand. And, as I demonstrate with two further presentations of *Rêverie*, the interactions between the text and the paratexts performing it may induce new realities for Debussy's musical text.

As a component of Michael Korstick's album *Debussy: Piano Music, Vol. IV* (2015), Debussy's *Rêverie* is enacted differently than in the Dover score. The tracks on the CD are almost identical to the index of *Claude Debussy: Piano Music (1888-1905)*, suggesting certain norms in grouping *Rêverie* with Debussy's other compositions around the same time. However, the cover art, featuring a headshot of the artist at the piano, along with the printed display of Korstick's name, communicates the compilation as the work of a concert artist. The depth achieved in the sound recording is reminiscent of a live, concert performance, juxtaposing the purity of the piano's tones against the ambience of the studio and the sounds of Korstick's motions. The title designating this CD as "Volume IV" indicates that the compilation is in itself a component of a larger project of recording the complete Debussy piano repertoire. But in interpreting the recordings as the work of Korstick as an artist, the tracks become representative of his impressive repertoire and talent as well as that of the composer.

The liner notes of the volume reinforce this interpretation of *Rêverie*. On the last page, another headshot of Korstick appears, with the artist's biography featured on the

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[8] Genette, *Paratexts*, 4.

facing page. Under the heading "Falling off the 'Debussy Cliff'" are Korstick's own words

on his inspiration for recording Debussy's music, which further contextualize the tracks

under his artistry. Also included are Robert Orledge's descriptions of the various tracks

on the CD, which resemble program notes one might find in the program for an artist's

live performance of these works in a concert hall. Orledge's program notes evidence

certain parallels between Korstick's performance of the text and that of the Dover edition:

> For his fourth CD, Michael Korstick has judiciously focused on Debussy's
> journey to maturity, from his earliest group of piano pieces around 1890 to the
> birth of what has become known as musical "impressionism" in the *Estampes* of
> 1903. The increasing fascination with Japanese prints by Hokusai, Hiroshige et al.
> during the 1880s and '90s visibly influenced artists like Van Gogh, Monet and
> Toulouse-Lautrec, but it was Debussy who finally created an evocative musical
> equivalent in *Pagodes*… [The] decorative and evocative concepts were still there
> if we are looking for "impressionistic" parallels - so Debussy could not
> completely reject the comparison, much as he disliked it.[9]

By enacting *Rêverie* as the work of a concert artist, Korstick's CD performs realities of

Debussy's text similar to those of Dover's edition. Both of these presentations enact the

musical text as a component of Debussy's works around the same time period, as a text

for realization at the piano, and in relation to Monet's impressionist style of painting. Just

as Dover's score can be understood as an intermediary between the editor and the pianist

who engages with the text, the paratexts of Korstick's CD invite us to interpret Korstick's

interaction with the text as performing an intermediary role of relaying the work from a

notated score to a listening audience.

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[9] Robert Orledge, notes to *Claude Debussy: Piano Music, Vol. IV*, by Michael Korstick,
SWR Music CD 93.337.

11

By contrast, listening to this same text presented through the paratexts of *Baby Needs Lullabys* [sic] (2001) invites other interpretations of *Rêverie*. A photo of an infant's head adorns the front of the CD, reinforcing the title's suggestion that the compilation is intended as music to use for soothing a baby to sleep. The back cover explains the adult consumer's need for the compilation in the modern age:

> Piano music has been a typical part of the home environment ever since the proliferation of the modern piano and its precursors. For the past two to three centuries, piano music has probably been second only to the mother's singing voice in accompanying babies into dreamland. Although in our time electronic entertainment has generally displaced playing the piano at home, the gift of soothing classical music can still be part of an infant's early experience. This collection of gentle music is designed not only to lull but to give the very young a beautiful experience with some of the greatest classical music of all time.[10]

Most music critics probably would remain unswayed by Delos Productions's unsupported narrative of piano music and lackluster generalizations about music in the home. However, for consumers who simply want to play soothing music to aid their child's sleep, the description is perhaps adequate to justify the purchase. The description is accompanied by an explanation of the odd spelling of the title in the form of a poem entitled "RX," written by "John Stone, M.D. Cardiologist and Poet." His endorsement of the CD compilation markets the music for parents concerned for their child's health, not the musician looking to purchase the work of a concert pianist. The track listing on the back features commonly known composers such as Debussy, Bach, and Brahms, and groups the musical texts within the compilation according to their respective composer.

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[10] Carol Rosenberger, back cover to *Baby Needs Lullabys*, Delos Music CD DE 1619.

Printed in rather small text next to this track listing is the name of the pianist, Carol Rosenberger.

For the consumer who purchases the album for concentrated listening, the liner notes provide information about Rosenberger as a performing artist. Rosenberger boasts an impressive résumé, having performed internationally and won several awards for her recordings. However, one has to go to some effort to extract from these paratexts an enactment of the CD as the work of a trained concert pianist, an enactment that was more readily promoted through the paratexts of Korstick's CD. And while the title of Korstick's album invites further listening of his other three volumes of Debussy's piano music, Delos Productions invites parents to purchase other CDs in their "Babyneeds Series" advertised in the liner, such as "Baby Needs Beauty," "Baby Needs Papa Haydn," and "Baby Needs Baroque."

Spotify has also presented Debussy's *Rêverie* to me in a number of settings. In one such instance, I used the customized radio function to have Spotify curate a playlist based on their "Classical Essentials" playlist. The playlist included a curious selection of works; notable tracks are listed below in Figure 1:

Figure 1 - Selected Tracks from Spotify Customized Playlist

Rêverie	Claude Debussy
Il barbiere di Siviglia: Overture (Sinfonia)	Gioachino Rossini
Le Carnaval des animaux: Aquarium	Camille Saint-Saëns
"Winter" from *The Four Seasons*	Antonio Vivaldi
Rondo Alla Turca	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Lyrische Suite: I. "Allegretto giovale"	Alban Berg
Für Elise	Ludwig van Beethoven
Symphonie fantastique: III. "Scène aux champs"	Hector Berlioz

While, as a music scholar, I enjoy listening to and studying each of these works individually, their combination into a single playlist was rather distracting. The stylistic variety among the members of this playlist commanded my attention over my studies, and the incompatibility in jumping between fully orchestrated sounds and solo artists became disruptive as the tracks progressed. For instance, Berg's twelve-tone expressionism abruptly displaced me from the ethereal, hypnotizing ostinatos of Saint-Saëns' "Aquarium," and Debussy's *Rêverie* took on a disconcerting quality when preceded by the comic, buffa atmosphere set by Rossini's overture.

Consider one final presentation of *Rêverie*. In searching for *Rêverie* on Spotify, a number of tracks are curated for the user. One of these appears on the album *Yoga Space Soothing Sounds* (2016). Although the paratexts communicate the text as Debussy's, the audio of the track is hardly recognizable as such. The pitches of the melody are played sporadically in various registers beneath a wash of drones that do not originate in Debussy's score. Therefore, Debussy's title may serve as a paratext whose function in describing a text will vary widely depending on the genre attribution of the text. *Rêverie* as a work of classical music prescribes a certain one-to-one relation between Debussy's notation and an aural realization in order for listeners to widely accept it as instantiating the work. *Rêverie* as "soothing sounds for yoga" may bear little resemblance to the notated score in this regard, but the title invites one to interpret a designation of the track's subject matter relating its content to Debussy's text. We might thus consider a musical text as an inscribed musical content that a particular culture intersubjectively endows with a certain significance and stability across its various paratextual

14

communications, though the degree of stability adequate for acceptance of any particular presentation as participating in the communication of a text is highly variable.

Through each of the above presentations of Debussy's *Rêverie* - through Dover's score, through a CD compilation, and through Spotify's curated streams - different performances by paratexts engender different modes of interpretation in the same musical text. Musical meaning in *Rêverie* necessarily occurs through a host of interpretations outside of those imparted by these particular interactions, as other uses and audiences for these presentations of the text are indeed possible. A pianist could, for instance, isolate Rosenberger's performance of *Rêverie* from the paratexts of *Baby Needs Lullabys* and adopt elements of her realization in their own interpretation of the work. Or, a Spotify listener could ignore the stylistic differences among the various tracks and composers generated from "Classical Essentials" and interpret an intertextual coherence through its classification as "Classical Music." Still, I would assert that certain prospects for musical meaning are both created and delimited by this mediation. While these mediating paratexts do not determine any single meaning for the music they mediate, the choice of paratexts one interprets is not entirely arbitrary. Paratextual performances are products of certain cultural norms that condition the performer's interpretation of the musical text, just as any subsequent engagement with music through these paratexts is a conditioned interaction through the particular enculturation of the interpreter.

Nicholas Cook engages with this conditioning in theorizing musical meaning. He draws on Daniel Miller's *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (1987) to strike a balance between contingency and necessity:

> In saying that the meaning of the object is socially constructed, [Miller] is not saying that it is simply or exclusively arbitrary. And it is the idea of the *attribute* that enables him to find a way between these two positions. The argument is in essence a simple one: any pot or picture has an indefinite, though not infinite, number of physical attributes, and each society makes its own selection from and interpretation of those attributes. (It is perhaps easiest to see what this might mean in terms of the different ways certain paintings have been seen at different times: Hans van Meegeren's Vermeer forgeries, for example, originally fooled experts but look quite different from the originals now. The shift in the way they are seen reflects a different set of attributes, and their price has changed accordingly.) The meaning that the object acquires within a particular culture is thus supported by - and at the same time helps to stabilize - the specific selection of attributes which that culture has made; it helps to make the object what it *is* for that culture. In this way, while meaning is socially constructed, it is both enabled and constrained by the available attributes of the object.[11]

Although the attributes to which Cook refers reside within the musical text, and therefore differ from paratexts, I find utility in bringing the two together to consider musical meaning. I offer a refinement of Cook's theories in highlighting some of the ways these two elements interact in a presentation of a text.

In enacting a musical text in light of its paratexts, one draws out various attributes of the text while marginalizing others, and these various configurations contribute to a text's existence as multiple. As Cook states elsewhere:

> [Performance studies] seeks to understand performances in relation to other performances… rather than in relation to the original vision supposedly embodied in an authoritative text; a given performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, for example, acquires its meaning from the relationship to the horizon of expectations

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[11] Nicholas Cook, "Theorizing Musical Meaning," *Music Theory Spectrum* 23 (Fall 2001): 178-179.

established by other performances… [The] work does not exist "above" the field of its instantiations, but is simply coterminous with its totality - which, of course, is why the Ninth Symphony is still evolving.[12]

 However, this field of interpretations of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is narrowed via paratexts. One thing paratexts do for the interpreter is help to highlight certain of these attributes that we ascribe to the text, influencing how we create meaning from them. Listening to a recording of Beethoven's Ninth conducted by Fritz Reiner introduces certain timbral and stylistic elements specific to this performance of attributes in the text, and while such sounding elements can be imagined in an engagement with the first edition score's enactment of the text, one might also utilize the affordances of the score's notation to conduct an out-of-time analysis of the work's structural features. The type of engagement one makes with any attribute is conditioned by their interpretation of that attribute through paratexts. Despite their manifestation across a variety of paratextual mediums, musical texts are ascribed a certain content by interpreters that accords with the interpretations created by other people, even as different individuals select and dismiss unique configurations of paratexts in their interpretation of a musical presentation. For one to accept the many paratextual presentations of a musical text as communicating a musical content that is intersubjectively recognized is, to a certain degree, to reconstruct a cultural understanding of paratexts through their interpretation of attributes in the text.[13]

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[12] Nicholas Cook, "Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance," *Music Theory Online* 7 (April 2001), accessed March 1, 2017, http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.01.7.2/mto.01.7.2.cook.html.

[13] Moreover, Cook falls victim to perspectivism in advancing that an indefinite number of attributes reside within the singular, textual entity, from which one selectively draws in

In each of the presentations of *Rêverie*, how we interpret the paratexts and their interactions with Debussy's text will inform our judgments about who uses the music and why. For instance, when a pianist interprets the text of a given score in a manner that conforms to the conventions of the work paradigm that has been dominant in Western art music since 1800, an interpretation of the paratexts communicating the text in the form of a score affords their understanding of the text as a musical work to be realized at the piano. We continually reconstruct the notion that paratexts communicate to users certain ways to engage with a musical text in order to understand music in this way. Rather than the extraction of texts from paratexts, it is the dialogue between texts and paratexts that is integral to the process of interpreting *Rêverie* as a musical work.

In the case of the CD compilation and the Spotify presentation of *Rêverie*, this dialogue affords interpretations of Debussy's text outside of those endorsed by this tradition. The purchaser of Rosenberger's compilation may not interpret the dialogue between a notated performance of *Rêverie* and the pianist's realization, and instead interpret a functional use for the text as a baby's lullaby. Though the paratexts of Korstick's CD more readily confer on it the status of a performance of a work, the materiality of the CD also affords its use in the home, and could easily be interpreted as music to play for soothing one's child. The Spotify playlist included a performance of *Rêverie* from Alain Planès's *Debussy: Complete Works for Solo Piano*, so this presentation is twice filtered from the artist's realization of the work. The playlist invites

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configuring their interpretation. Mol's notion of multiplicity refines this theory, as the interaction between text and actor co-produces attributes in the text.

one to consider the paratexts communicating the artist's work as secondary, and instead to interpret the work as a performance of the "Classical music" genre that one can stream to accompany any number of activities throughout their day. As the pianists of all three recordings do relay the notated content of Debussy's text on the piano, their products also invite a listener's interpretation analogous to that of experiencing the work in a concert hall. But the material paratexts of CDs and of Spotify suggest different relations between users and texts than those of the score or the concert hall.

Any framework for interpretation is itself a paratext mediating the meaning of a musical text; to quote Genette, "every context serves as a paratext."[14] Interpreting a performance of *Rêverie* as a musical work involves a reconstruction of a complex network of practices organizing the content of a musical text. However, this understanding of *Rêverie* is not the only possible context for interpreting an instantiation of Debussy's text. Kevin Korsyn (1999) argues that it is better to maximize these different interpretations than to promote the status of any single reading. He refers to "privileged contexts" for interpreting music history, stating that historians privilege certain readings of music over others when they frame musical interpretation in ways that foster a continuous narrative. As Korsyn states:

> [These contexts] are privileged because historians rely on a limited number of contexts, preferring certain types of frames to others, so that the series of contexts becomes stereotyped and predictable, limiting the questions that we ask about music… We tend to take these privileged contexts for granted, seldom doubting

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[14] Genette, *Paratexts*, 8.

the legitimacy of the narrative unities that they foster, just as we seldom doubt the unity of the individual text.[15]

Even so, the enculturation of the listener will often lead them to interpret music through what Ola Stockfelt calls adequate modes of listening: modes of listening "according to the exigencies of a given social situation and according to the predominant sociocultural conventions of the subculture to which the music belongs."[16] Listening to Mozart's Symphony no. 40 through headphones on an airplane, for example, may help to induce a state of composure for anxious travelers. Such modes of engaging with Mozart's work are very different from those associated with the symphonic concert setting. As Stockfelt claims:

> Identically-sounding musical works, listened through different modes of listening, may engender different kinds of music experiences and even experiences of fundamentally different musical works. New modes of listening have been developed for new relations between listener and music and in relation to new repertoires… Today, when a vast spectrum of musical styles are an available, nearly unavoidable part of everyday life, and when the same piece of music can exist in a number of wildly differentiated listening situations, each listener has a great repertoire of modes of listening that corresponds to the great repertoire of styles of music and listening situations in the everyday soundscape.[17]

Adequate modes of listening frame the interpretation of music through paratexts in particular ways that lead listeners to create musical meaning they believe is most pertinent in that context. The way one listens to music is "often more conditioned by the

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[15] Kevin Korsyn, "Beyond Privileged Contexts: Intertextuality, Influence, and Dialogue," in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 67-68.

[16] Ola Stockfelt, "Adequate Modes of Listening," in *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinarity, Culture*, ed. David Schwarz et al. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 137.

[17] Stockfelt, "Adequate Modes," 132.

situation in which one meets the music than by the music itself."[18] This notion of adequacy means that one's choice of mode to structure their listening experience is reinforced when one's interpretation of music in a given situation agrees with the interpretations of others. When Stockfelt discusses the change in mode of listening when one is exposed to Mozart's Symphony on an airplane instead of in the concert hall, he highlights the importance of such contextual mediation. Paratextual contexts not only necessitate changes in listening behavior in order to comprehend the work through the given medium, but they also impinge on the ways music can and does mean.

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[18] Stockfelt, "Adequate Modes," 133.

The Publisher's Framework: Transcribing George Winston's Recorded Sound

Genette distinguishes between two features of a paratext: its *status* and its *function*. The status of a paratext defines characteristics of *location*, as situated either within the same volume as the text or distanced from it; *temporal*, as appearing (or disappearing) either prior to, concurrent with, or after the appearance of the production of the text; *substantial*, as a textual, iconic, material, or factual manifestation, among other possibilities; and *pragmatic*, as the nature of the sender and the addressee. The functionality of a paratext describes its essence as "a discourse that is fundamentally heteronomous, auxiliary, and dedicated to the service of something other than itself that constitutes its raison d'être. This something is the text."[19] Genette highlights certain differences between the status and the function of a paratext in mediating our interpretation of a text:

> The spatial, temporal, substantial, and pragmatic situation of a paratextual element is determined by a more or less free choice from among possible alternatives supplied by a general and uniform grid; and from these possible alternatives, only one term - to the exclusion of the others - can be adopted… Functional choices, however, are not of this alternative, exclusive, either-or kind. A title, a dedication or inscription, a preface, an interview can have several purposes at once, selected - without exclusion of all the others - from the (more or less open) repertory appropriate to each type of element (the title has its own functions, the dedication of the work its own, the preface takes care of other or sometimes the same functions), without prejudice to the subcategories specific to each paratextual element (a thematic title like *War and Peace* does not describe its text in exactly the same way a formal title like *Epistles* or *Sonnets* does; the stakes for an inscription of a copy are not those for a dedication of a work; a delayed preface does not have the same purpose as an original preface, nor an allographic preface the same purpose as an authorial preface; and so forth).[20]

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[19] Genette, *Paratexts*, 12.
[20] Genette, *Paratexts*, 12-13.

Here, Genette alludes to a certain conditioned interpretation of paratexts, in which we continually invoke these categories in order to interpret the interactions between a text and its paratexts in ways deemed most appropriate in a specific situation. Adequate modes of constructing and understanding these categories are contingent upon the enculturation of the interpreter, and will change as paratexts survive through the evolving social environments that interpret them.

Genette suggests an interaction between status and function that informs his subsequent analysis:

> The functions of the paratext therefore constitute a highly empirical and highly diversified object that must be brought into focus inductively, genre by genre and often species by species. The only significant regularities one can introduce into this apparent contingency are to establish these relations of subordination between function and status and thus pinpoint various sorts of *functional types* and, as well, reduce the diversity of practices and messages to some fundamental and highly recurrent themes, for experience shows that the discourse we are dealing with here is more "constrained" than many others and is one in which authors innovate less often than they imagine.[21]

Consistencies in paratextual performances, and in our interpretations of them, structure Genette's proceeding theorization of various functional types and recurrent themes of paratexts. In this section, I relate my theory of paratextual mediation of musical texts to Genette's study of paratexts in literature. Specifically, I offer an analysis of Hal Leonard's compilation *George Winston: Piano Solos* (2007), which highlights both the differences and the interactions between the paratexts of the score transcriptions and those of the original CD compilations. By disseminating Winston's music through the paratexts of their volume, Hal Leonard and George Winston enact attributes of the musical texts

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[21] Genette, *Paratexts*, 13.

differently than Winston's recorded performances, leading to different uses and interpretations of this music that nonetheless collaborate with and depend on their CD presentations.

Hal Leonard's logo is featured on the front and back covers, as well as on the spine of the volume, which contextualizes the musical texts within their publishing library. Genette refers to such items as the "publisher's peritext," which constitutes "the zone that exists merely by the fact that a book is published and possibly republished and offered to the public in one or several more or less varied presentations."[22] The publisher's peritext includes the covers, title pages and appendages, and the material construction of the published volume. Through these paratexts, the publishing company "encroaches on the prerogatives of an author."[23]

Hal Leonard publishes music under different series labels; in the case of *George Winston: Piano Solos*, the compilation is a member of their "Piano Solo Personality" series. Unlike other series published by Hal Leonard, the "Piano Solo Personality" designation is not indicated on the score. However, the various paratexts in this series perform this membership by featuring the particular "personality" that unifies the various texts in the compilation. Therefore, our interpretation of the localized paratexts in this series is supplemented by information gleaned from elsewhere, as the outside paratexts highlighted by the "Piano Solo Personality" series become integral to interpreting these musical texts.

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[22] Genette, *Paratexts*, 16.
[23] Genette, *Paratexts*, 23.

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The cover art of *George Winston: Piano Solos* displays a cherry blossom tree that does not appear on any of Winston's CD covers. However, one can interpret the connection between this image and the nature scenes adorning many of his albums inspired by the changing seasons in Montana, such as *December* (1982), *Forest* (1994), and *Winter into Spring* (2002). Under the title of the compilation is a printed advertisement that the score represents "Exact Transcriptions From The Recordings; Authorized by George Winston."[24] Winston's name is no longer simply a statement of authorship, but his *onymity* becomes a "way to put an identity, or rather a 'personality'… at the service of the book."[25] That Winston himself oversaw the transcribed notation that will allow the user to reproduce "exactly" the recorded texts gives a certain authority to the score's presentation of them.

Further connection to Winston's CDs is established through the paratextual information for each individual transcription. For instance, "Thanksgiving" is an original composition that first appeared as the opening track on Winston's album *December* (1982). On these album notes, Winston offers an interpretation of "Thanksgiving" that may evoke a "New-age music" classification scheme for the listener, writing that the track is "inspired by friends and places of Miles City, Montana."[26] Hal Leonard's compilation draws on these liner notes in printing this same description on their "Song Notes" page. On the page for the transcription of "Thanksgiving," Hal Leonard prints

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[24] George Winston, front cover to *George Winston: Piano Solos* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2007).
[25] Genette, *Paratexts*, 40.
[26] George Winston, notes to *December*, Windham Hill Music CD WD-1025.

"from the solo piano album *December*" below the song title. These paratexts invite interpretation of "Thanksgiving" through certain frameworks that arise from its appearance on the album, in addition to those communicated directly through score.

Winston's name is printed in several places throughout the volume: in the "Notes from George Winston" on the back of the title page; on the back cover featuring Winston's personal website; under the title of each piece crediting him either as the arranger or as the author of the composition; and in his biography and selected discography on the ending pages of the compilation. These various uses of Winston's name are not merely neutral markers of identity, but their appearance participates in what Genette calls the "genre contract" of the work:

> The author's name fulfills a contractual function whose importance varies greatly depending on genre… The genre contract is constituted, more or less consistently, by the whole of the paratext and, more broadly, by the relation between text and paratext.[27]

The descriptive label "Piano Solo Personality" functions as a genre contract, as do "Music of a Pianist-Songwriter" and "Pre-recorded music transcriptions." Yet, one may also interpret the interaction between text and paratext through other genre frameworks as well, such as those arising from the albums like "New-age music," or those from Winston's website like his self-described "Rural folk piano," or his proclaimed influences

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[27] Genette, *Paratexts*, 41.

in "R&B," "Jazz," "Blues," and "Rock."[28] One might even interpret the music under a more localized classification scheme like "Music about nature," or a more general one like "Notated score for piano." Yet, while certain configurations of paratexts afford certain genre classifications, the ascription of the text to any genre is not merely a one-way translation from paratext to text, as one's selection of genre contexts to structure their interpretation is simultaneously brought about by the affordances of the text. It would make little sense to interpret Winston's music under a "Punk rock" framework, for instance, but familiarity with Winston's playing style informs his texts as "Rural folk piano."

Let us consider these prefatory "Notes from George Winston," specifically the ways the interaction between text and paratext mediates musical meaning in "Thanksgiving" differently through different genre frameworks:

> These are exact transcriptions of 20 songs from my albums, with chord labels included. One should feel free to interpret and change them however they want - I do that with all songs that I play. (These transcribed versions are just the way the songs were played on the days that I recorded them). I learn music by ear, and I use chords and music theory to learn and remember music (see facing page).
>
> One of the reasons I play the piano is that I prefer the quality of the sustain that the piano has over strings or organ, etc… The other reason I play the piano is because it has power and volume, and because it is possible to play a lot of songs with multiple parts as solo instrumentals, which is my temperament as a musician. I mainly think of the piano as if it is an Afro-American tuned drum.
>
> Many thanks to Tom Bockhold (www.tombockhold.com) for doing the initial transcriptions that I later fine-tuned while listening to the recordings, and for

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[28] George Winston, "Bio," accessed April 20, 2017, http://www.georgewinston.com/about.

being so great to work with, and for understanding so well my unusual ways of playing.[29]

The opening statement that the score contains "exact transcriptions" of songs from his albums, "with chord labels included," is directed at an audience interested in the score as "Pre-recorded music transcriptions" or "Notated score for piano." Interpreting the score in this way allows the user to emulate Winston's recording for "Thanksgiving" by realizing the notation, with the inclusion of chord labels being secondary to the notated symbols on the staff.

However, the following sentence undermines such an interpretation by inviting the user to "interpret and change them however they want." In fact, Winston himself adheres to such practices of manipulation. Winston improvises over the circle-of-fifths harmonic framework of "Thanksgiving" in his live performances of the piece, often deviating from the realization he offers on his album. Moreover, although the cover implies that the notation for "Thanksgiving" is an exact transcription of Winston's recording on *December*, some might interpret this as false advertising. There are many errors in the notation for these transcriptions, contradicting either the chord progression or Winston's realization on the album.[30] Therefore, the preface might frame interpretation in other ways: as Winston participates in improvisatory traditions of music, the exactness of the notated transcription in resembling the CD version of the song becomes secondary to the multiplicity of realizations that Winston implements in practice. Interpreting the

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[29] Winston, *Piano Solos*, 2.
[30] In m. 36 of the score for "Thanksgiving," for instance, the notated D-natural in the right hand contradicts prior iterations of the motive, as well as the D-sharp depicted both in the left hand and by the B9 chord designation above the measure.

score in this way might highlight the notated chord symbols of the text, but diminish the importance of their exact realization in favor of the performer's improvisatory manipulation.

Interpretation under notions of exact duplication of the recording is further undermined by the ending paragraph, which informs the user that someone else transcribed Winston's playing. Although Winston "fine-tuned" these transcriptions, they also represent a product of Tom Bockhold's output, as he participates in enacting Winston's music through the compilation. That the transcriptions are not the sole product of Winston's work leaves room for interpretive license in the score. Transcribing Winston's playing into notation does not result in a neutral resemblance, but in a performative act that translates the recorded texts into a score. Even though we may recognize the score as notating "exactly" the text of the recording, such a one-to-one relationship between notation and recorded sound structure is not necessary for one to accept the two enactments as embodying a single musical text.

Considering Winston's statements may guide one to interpret the score as essentially a lead sheet or a chord chart, accompanied by a suggested realization. While the user is free to ignore Winston's prose and engage with the notation in the score transcription in a manner akin to the realization of a composer's text in the Classical tradition, interpretation may also be guided by taking into account Winston's statements on playing style and his prefatory advice on how to use the score. One of the functions of these notes are to preface one's reading of the text by providing what Genette refers to as

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"the author's interpretation of the text or, if your prefer, his statement of intent."[31] Hal Leonard's "Piano Solo Personality" designation highlights this use of the preface. Winston too advances such a function when he offers his interpretation of the piano's power in conveying his personal style through the texts in the volume. Reading the preface as a statement of intent means that Winston's statements about the player's liberty in manipulating the text will influence how one interprets these texts, whether by leading one to choose some genre framework over another, or by guiding one to select and dismiss certain principles normally ascribed to the framing genre in their interpretation.

Yet, motivating such an authorial reading of the music is not the only purpose behind the paratexts that appear in the preface. Hal Leonard exploits the tendencies of users to elevate the author's statements in their interpretation in order to advertise further purchase of their products. Winston's advocacy of the utility of chord theory in his playing prompts advertisement for Hal Leonard's *Picture Chord Encyclopedia for Keyboard*. Winston's recorded arrangements of Vince Guaraldi's music, and his close ties to another Montana-based pianist, Philip Aaberg, are used to advertise Hal Leonard's piano transcriptions of these two artists. Still, these paratexts invite the user to create further meaning in Winston's texts by engaging with the music of these other artists and drawing connections between them, though there are many ways each such user may navigate these connections.

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[31] Genette, *Paratexts*, 221.

The preface functions to provide information guiding one's reading of the text by presupposing that this reading will be informed by Winston's performance style and contributions to the score. The score assumes a certain relationship between the user and the text that the preface helps to frame. As Genette posits: "arguments of the why have been eclipsed… by themes of the how, which have the advantage of *presupposing* the why and therefore (by the well-known force of presupposition) of imperceptibly imposing it."[32] This idea that paratexts privilege certain audiences and ways of interpreting music means that the paratexts of different media forms have particular affordances that induce in the subject certain ways to engage with musical texts. Understanding paratexts in this way guides interpreters to enact certain intermediary roles in music's dissemination and reception. And yet, in continually reconstructing the notion that paratexts prescribe certain relations between interpreters and musical texts, our acts of communicating through paratexts in evolving contexts continually redefine how this interaction is understood.

The material format of the musical text as a CD or as a score is one way these relations are communicated. For instance, the song notes on *December* help frame the listening experience for the listener who sits down with the booklet while playing Winston's CD, while these same notes as presented in the score help frame the pianist's realization of the text. Will Straw discusses the CD as one such meaningful format for music, and suggests that the paratexts of CDs "imply a particular form of ideal listening event, in which a listener would pore slowly through the accompanying booklet while a

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[32] Genette, *Paratexts,* 209.

musical work unfolded."[33] Such ways of interpreting CD paratexts stemmed from a

listening experience that had developed around vinyl LP's. Straw examines the CD's

beginnings in classical music recordings, as this genre was seen as "best suited to

demonstrating the superiority of new audio hardware."[34] Through this relationship

between music genre and listening experience, a certain set of cultural meanings were

attributed to the CD as a format; Straw notes that one of the ways the CD was meaningful

was by providing a way to upgrade older LP versions of these recordings.[35] As

developing technologies and changing ways of relating to music come into practice, these

cultural meanings of the CD format evolve with them. Though music on CDs was

perhaps initially understood through its relation to the LP, the CD's potential portability

differs from LP's. As more people took advantage of its portability, the CD became what

Straw posits as "a technology of intermediate agglomeration," a format used to transport

and stockpile music from CDs into expansive, digital collections.[36]

        Through the various ways one may interact with Winston's texts through the CD,

users may manipulate the originating interaction between text and paratext. From

uploading the tracks to a personal music locker like iTunes to burning a selection of

tracks into a different CD compilation, the CD medium affords a relatively high degree of

paratextual destabilization.[37] As Devon Powers examines, even the act of shuffling one's

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[33] Will Straw, "The Music CD and Its Ends," *Design and Culture* 1 (2009): 86.
[34] Straw, "Music CD," 83.
[35] Straw, "Music CD," 83.
[36] Straw, "Music CD," 83.
[37] Straw characterizes the CD as being "plagued by an unstable relationship" between the disc and its paratexts; see Straw, "Music CD," 86.

collection of tracks through a media player or a CD changer makes available new

groupings and associations for musical texts through which the listener may draw

meaning.[38] Some of these acts may also recontextualize further interpretation of the text

for others; for instance, a Spotify tastemaker may take "Thanksgiving" from its album

context and use it as a component of an "Artists from Montana" playlist, which frames

interpretation of the text for the listener differently than if the listener had received the

text through the original album. Paratexts like cover art and compilation titles help to

unify the musical variety in any collection, and lead the listener to draw out attributes in

the texts through which this interconnection may be interpreted. As the text is placed in

different groupings and strategies for compiling music, it takes on new possibilities for

meaning in each of these particular paratextual contexts.

　　As Antoine Hennion posits in *The Passion for Music: A Sociology of Mediation*

(1993), music is an accumulation of mediators that feed off and depend on one another; it

is "the sum of the multitude of procedures and media that music harnesses in order to

endure."[39] Musical texts, as heterogeneous objects, are consistently recreated and

reinterpreted through the various material forms into which they are inscribed. Music

therefore constitutes a space of transaction between the interpreting subject and the

musical object. Neither the interpreter of a text nor the paratexts making it perceptible are

solely responsible for the ways music means, but each is dependent on the other in

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[38] Devon Powers, "Lost in the Shuffle: Technology, History, and the Idea of Musical Randomness," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 31 (2014): 244-264.

[39] Antoine Hennion, *The Passion for Music: A Sociology of Mediation*, trans. Margaret Rigaud and Peter Collier (London: Routledge, 2016), 203.

forming the chain of instantiations that continually redefine a musical text. Hennion

examines this dialectic between subject and object through the controversy of musical

taste between Modernist constructions and historically-informed interpretations of

Baroque music:

> What gradually creates music is the accumulation of the long series of small secondary instances through which it was stabilised onto various objects… All the traces of this music which a material format had managed to stabilise were completely disregarded if they contravened contemporary musical means. Conversely, as soon as the historical accuracy of these means became a concern, the tastes they represented collapsed entirely, unable to withstand the number of early objects which all of a sudden were being earnestly reclaimed from the past and brought back to the present… [T]his leads to a heterogeneous series of mediations which are all located in the space which lies in-between human beings and things, and which are more or less deeply inscribed into matter, as well as more or less widely recognised and shared: the instruments which are used to play music, the texts which are read, the formats which are used, the practices which are repeated time after time, the habits which have been incorporated into bodies.[40]

Ways of relating to music through scores or CDs are not wholly constituted by

their material paratexts, but our interactions with music are not wholly possible without

engaging in some way the affordances paratextual objects come to embody. The musical

meanings made possible through paratexts occur precisely through this dialectic: as we

participate in intermediary networks communicating and receiving music through

paratexts, we reinforce and naturalize the prescriptive weight attributed to paratexts, but

the relations between interpreters and musical texts embodied by paratexts depend on the

evolving space of accumulating mediators like technologies, practices, institutions, and

systems of thought that continually redefine how we understand music through them.

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[40] Hennion, *Passion*, 204-206

Paratexts in the Cloud

In this section, I explore paratextual mediation through Spotify. As Webster et al. examine, music recommender systems like Spotify are cultural intermediaries that comprise "complex sociotechnical systems made up of people, technologies, knowledge, data algorithms and other heterogeneous actors."[41] In structuring itself as a network of human and technological actors responsible for music's dissemination to listeners, Spotify affords users greater agency in affixing paratexts to digital texts. Spotify employs various mediators of musical texts that interact and depend on one another in structuring music in their interface: these include on-demand streaming; online-radio, similar to Pandora; virtual CD browsing and discovery, listening, and collection; a digital music locker like iTunes; user-created and expert-created playlists drawing on radio practices; a social media feed through which users can discover music through the listening habits of their friends; collaborative filtering; and analysis of human discourse on music through techniques like web-crawling and data-mining. As I examine, digitizing music and its mediators through Spotify's interface is not a neutral process of agglomeration, but one that participates in our evolving understandings of music through their mediation.

Through modes of organizing the listening experience such as mood and genre playlists, artist radio stations, and virtual music discovery and curation, music found in Spotify has the potential to be conveyed through a vast number of contexts. Spotify

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[41] Jack Webster et al., "Towards a Theoretical Approach for Analysing Music Recommender Systems as Sociotechnical Cultural Intermediaries," in *Proceedings of the 8th ACM Conference on Web Science* (2016): 138, accessed April 20, 2017, doi:10.1145/2908131.2908148.

presents music to listeners through paratexts that appear in the interface, contextualizing in certain ways audio files otherwise stripped from the original recorded format in which they may have originally appeared. This mediation engenders various processes of disaggregation and reaggregation of musical texts, which opens some new avenues for musical meaning while restricting and effacing others.

My case study into Spotify begins with a personal experience in an Austin, TX record store called Waterloo Records. In browsing new and used CDs sorted by artist, I came across their collection of Emerson, Lake & Palmer. After flipping through expected albums like *Brain Salad Surgery* and *Pictures at an Exhibition*, I noticed a sign posted on the section divider for the artist: "Like Emerson, Lake & Palmer? Check out local Austin prog rock group Thirteen of Everything. We have them here, grab your copy today!" While the advertisement serves to motivate the customer to spend more money by purchasing other CDs from Waterloo, what I find more intriguing is the strategy behind recommending music to the customer. By classifying Emerson, Lake & Palmer as progressive rock, and by imagining the customer as one who is interested in Austin music, Waterloo employs paratexts to recommend a new artist the listener might like. I begin my introduction to Spotify by drawing on this particular experience.

Spotify is a digital music service that similarly features an artist recommendation system, and a virtual CD browsing and collecting experience comparable to that of a record store. On their artist page for Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Spotify features their collection of the artist's represented albums sorted by date. Emerson, Lake & Palmer's tracks are recombined into their respective album presentations, communicated through

such paratexts as artist classification, cover art, and track listing that help render music as digital data intelligible to the user. However, the experience of browsing a discography on Spotify differs from that of browsing a record store. While the experience of discovering music at a record store is contingent upon the physical holdings of the store on that particular day, file streams on Spotify are stripped of their disc, case, and liner note materials that comprise their CD presentation, and the browsing experience is contingent upon licensing agreements and user contracts, rather than material limitations.

In *Selling Digital Music: Formatting Culture* (2015), Jeremy Morris characterizes digital music as a remediated commodity, closely intertwined with the physical artifacts they represent.[42] In the case of Spotify's collection of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, the various album icons contextualizing their library of tracks are "skeuomorphs" of their earlier media formats, using familiarity to "perpetuate old patterns, practices, and conceptual frameworks, even if the technology itself has progressed beyond it."[43] Although browsing an artist's collection of album works is a familiar practice, perhaps leading many to engage with music in certain ways presumed by a layout that relies on this recognition, a unique configuration of paratexts is ultimately responsible for music's presentation through Spotify's format. This altering of music's materiality introduces different ways of relating to music:

> As data, the digital music commodity sheds its previous material signifiers and sonic artifacts (album artwork, stretched cassette tape, the hiss of an analog record), but this leaves room for other signs, materials, and artifacts to take their

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[42] Jeremy Morris, *Selling Digital Music: Formatting Culture* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2015), 14.

[43] Morris, *Selling Digital Music*, 58-59.

place. Through various technologies, software, and interfaces designed to play, distribute, and consume digital music files, recorded music as a digital file was gradually redressed with features, attributes, and sonic qualities that reworked its commodity form. In other words music on computers experiences a *re-tuning* of its interface… Music's re-tuning has made it playable in new ways and left it conditional on a network of hardware and software that alters its materiality and affects how users are able to access and experience music.[44]

As Morris notes, Spotify draws on an interface conventionalized by Winamp, which set a precedent for how later media players like iTunes contextualized music on computers. As such, user experience with music through paratexts of CDs and iTunes helps structure interpretation through Spotify's interface. However, Spotify manipulates such formats for relating to music by outsourcing music's storage from the user's hard drive to the cloud. Whereas with CDs or iTunes, the user engages in certain relationships with musical texts that are suggested by the paratexts of the format, with Spotify the user legally enters into this relationship by agreeing to Spotify's terms of service. The cloud, as "a technology of presentation, storage, distribution, and consumption wrapped into one," signals a shift from a collection and ownership of music's material objects to one of a "willing delegation of musical collection, curation, and discovery to service providers."[45] We therefore enact two intermediary roles in this engagement with music through Spotify: we ourselves enact a participatory role in Spotify's network of listening agents, and at the same time enact Spotify as a network of senders shaping our experience of the music and paratexts we provisionally receive through the service.

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[44] Morris, *Selling Digital Music*, 16-17.
[45] Morris, *Selling Digital Music*, 171.

This change in how we relate to music is evident through the "Related Artists" tab featured on artist profile pages. Like Waterloo's advertisement, Spotify presumes a certain relationship between Emerson, Lake & Palmer's genre classification and the likely user browsing their music in curating artists like Yes, Genesis, and Jethro Tull for further listening. However, unlike Waterloo, Spotify does not draw the connection between Emerson, Lake & Palmer and Thirteen of Everything as "Related Artists." Thirteen of Everything and their "Related Artists" are categorized in Spotify as "crossover prog," which is a smaller subgenre of progressive rock. Moreover, while Emerson, Lake & Palmer and similar artists are "mainstream," as evidenced by their high number of monthly listeners and followers, Thirteen of Everything is relatively more obscure. With only six monthly listeners and ten followers, Thirteen of Everything gets grouped with the other "obscure crossover prog" artists that Spotify curates in their "Related Artists."

"Related Artists" are algorithmically generated from a number of sources, including listener play habits within the application, web-crawling, and independent judgments made by employees at Spotify. Listening habits with Thirteen of Everything's music are statistically less represented in Spotify's algorithms than a band like Emerson, Lake & Palmer that has hundreds of plays per day. As such, the "Related Artists" for Emerson, Lake & Palmer represent the artists that large numbers of listeners often group with their music in a playlist setting. That Thirteen of Everything does not yet appear in this group of artists does not preclude the possibility of this eventually occurring, but it would require a host of listeners to start drawing these connections between the two groups. Moreover, Spotify crawls the web for blog posts, articles, and other web pages

39

with listener discourse on these bands. If a genre term like "progressive rock," or the name of a band like "Genesis" becomes frequently referenced in association with Emerson, Lake & Palmer, the algorithm interprets a meaningful connection between them. Discourse surrounding a relatively more obscure group like Thirteen of Everything is less likely to carve out a significant connection to Emerson, Lake & Palmer in this regard, especially when compared to the sheer scope of data available on the mainstream bands currently presiding over the progressive rock genre. And while algorithms that draw out patterns of discourse surrounding a band allows for communities of listeners to exercise a certain amount of power in shaping what artists appear as "Related Artists" in Spotify, listener interpretation is ultimately filtered through the overriding judgments of Spotify's employees, who perform a gatekeeping function on musical content.

However, the possibilities for listeners to influence the definition of musical content for a more obscure group like Thirteen of Everything multiplies through this technology. Spotify gathers data about the select group of Thirteen of Everything's listeners in understanding how to classify their music. Though Thirteen of Everything is an Austin-based group of musicians, they do not presently have a following of Austin listeners on Spotify. Instead, listeners are evenly distributed between Houston, Portland, and Fort Lauderdale in the U.S., and extending out to Curitiba, Brazil and Padua, Italy. This distribution perhaps accounts for the similarly widespread geographic representation of related artists, such as Italian group Mangala Vallis, Dutch group Nice Beaver, and Greek group La Tulipe Noire. Unlike the extensive artist biographies that appear for artists like Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Thirteen of Everything has no such information

stored in this database. A user engaging with Spotify by browsing Austin-based music

probably would not discover anew Thirteen of Everything, at least at present, as their

classification as "Austin music" is eclipsed in favor of the communal genre frames and

patterns of listening that structure their music in Spotify. Still, Spotify's missing metadata

and shortage of user-data on Thirteen of Everything does not prevent one from

discovering their music in other ways, and forging connections to other artists. As Morris

states, "music's older commodity forms have not simply disappeared into the cloud; they

co-exist, intermingling and influencing each other."[46]

By channeling our listening habits and data to fuel the algorithms behind the

music we engage with, Spotify presents interesting conditions for musical meaning by

delegating the creation of contexts and paratexts to users. Morris describes this

exploitation of interpretive activity in terms of user labor:

> Of course, fans were performing many of these activities long before music went
> digital. They were recommending music to their friends and peers; they were
> sharing songs and CDs with each other and logging their preferences. The
> difference with music in the cloud is the extent to which these activities can be
> tracked, packaged, and offered back to users as part of the service.[47]

An understanding of music through patterns of engagement with paratexts has underlain

each of my case studies thus far. The difference with Spotify is that participation in

communal acts of interpretation is what fuels the application. These acts feed into how

music is further disseminated to users through a particular configuration of paratexts,

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[46] Morris, *Selling Digital Music*, 189.
[47] Morris, *Selling Digital Music*, 185.

which thereby contextualize the interpretive acts on musical texts presented through them.

Encountering music through album paratexts on Artist profile pages represent but a small portion of the many possibilities for the communication of musical texts through paratexts in Spotify. Spotify organizes musical content through a host of ordering strategies, embodying varying degrees of relation and manipulation to the original recorded format for these musical texts. One of the ways Spotify presents music to listeners is through the Spotify-created mood playlists that appear on every user's "Browse" page, certain of which are recommended to the user at the top of the page based on their time of access and data on their listening habits. Accessing the page on a Saturday afternoon turns out recommendations for listening like the "Weekend Hangouts" and "Indie Brunch" playlists. However, the user is free to browse playlists that represent different moods, times of day, events, and genres they might be looking for to accompany their daily activities. For example, under the "Travel" icon, one finds a host of playlists for different types of travel experiences. Ordering strategies for these playlists vary: a location like "Highway 61" binds together artists like Louis Armstrong, Muddy Waters, and Elvis Presley; an activity like "Songs to Sing in the Car" groups songs such as "Hello" by Adele, "Riptide" by Vance Joy, and "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing" by Aerosmith; or a mood like being excited to "Hurry Home" groups together upbeat, mainstream songs like "Super Bass" by Nicki Minaj, "I Really Like You" by Carly Rae Jepsen, and "Renegades" by X Ambassadors. Spotify employs a technology they call

"Truffle Pig" in creating playlists like the "Travel" playlists. Entering in any number of parameters about the sound, lyric content, genre, or artist returns a list of tracks that may be classified under these parameters, from which Spotify editors assemble a selection of tracks into a coherent playlist.[48] By taking these tracks from their original album or other recorded compilation and reaggregating them under the playlist paratexts, Spotify manipulates the interconnections and attributes the listener may draw out in these texts to interpret their meaning in a playlist context.

Another way of organizing playlists in Spotify is by compiling tracks by artists performing at current events like music festivals, such as Austin City Limits, South by Southwest, and Coachella. For instance, Radiohead performed at both Austin City Limits (2016) and Coachella (2017), but amongst two rather different groups of artists. In shuffling through user Devin Rogers's popular playlist "ACL 2016," one may encounter Radiohead's music in the midst of tracks by rapper LL Cool J, Norwegian tropical house DJ Kygo, Austin country artist Willie Nelson, and South African hip hop duo Die Antwoord. The Coachella playlist engenders another eclectic listening experience, grouping Radiohead with singer-songwriter Lady Gaga, British indie pop band Bastille, and R&B artist DJ Khaled. Despite the wide range of genres and styles represented by each of these playlists, the listener may find unity when they are communicated through the paratexts contextualizing the compilation by their respective music festivals.

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[48] Josh Constine, "Inside the Spotify - Echo Nest Skunkworks," accessed April 19, 2017, https://techcrunch.com/2014/10/19/the-sonic-mad-scientists.

With these playlists, Spotify's network of employees and technologies are

primarily responsible for the particular aggregation of texts communicated through

playlist paratexts, but technologies like "Truffle Pig" democratize a certain amount of this

framing power to listeners through *metadata*. Morris, drawing on Vellucci (1999),

provides a useful definition for metadata as it pertains to digital music:

> Metadata is structured 'data that describes the attributes of a resource,
> characterizes its relationships to other resources […and] supports the discovery,
> management, and use of a resource' (Vellucci, 1999: 205)… Like the
> bibliographic data and cataloguing structures that exist for physical, non-
> electronic resources (e.g. a book's Dewey Decimal number or Library of Congress
> designation), digital metadata engender novel sorting and ordering practices.
> However, because digital data enhance both the amount of information that can be
> gathered and the speed with which it can be searched and used (Poster, 1990: 96),
> the sheer scope and scale of resources that can be tracked and the attributes that
> can be assigned to them multiply significantly. Digital metadata also open up the
> classification process to a wider group of participants… [T]op-down, authorial
> metadata co-mingle with more colloquial, user-generated labeling systems found
> on sites like Flickr, YouTube, or the CDDB.[49]

Through metadata, listeners can participate in the organization of musical content through

their online discourse and various interactions with Internet technology. Metadata is both

descriptive and prescriptive according to Morris; metadata characterizes attributes in a

text and information about it, and it advances certain ways of classifying and organizing a

text based around certain culturally normative schemes of parsing its content.

To illustrate ways listener metadata can participate in framing digital music

through paratexts, consider The Echo Nest: a music intelligence and data analysis

platform that gathers the metadata powering Spotify. As a case example, one way The

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[49] Jeremy Morris, "Making Music Behave: Metadata and the Digital Music Commodity,"
New Media & Society 14 (2012): 852-853.

Echo Nest organizes the metadata they gather surrounds musical genres. Spotify draws

on this metadata to structure their genre playlists, such as "The Sound of [genre]," "The

Edge of [genre]," and "The Pulse of [genre]." For example, "The Edge of [genre]" is

described as a playlist of "emerging mostly-unknown music that serious [genre] listeners

have discovered."[50] The contents of these playlists fluctuate regularly with The Echo

Nest's metadata, combining various tracks whose lifetime on the playlist ranges from a

few days to a few months.

The Echo Nest's genre metadata is reflected in their "scatter-plot of the musical

genre-space" called "Every Noise at Once."[51] The map generates an interactive, visual-

audio representation of genre relations through techniques like data mining, web

crawling, and audio and discourse analysis. Users can explore current prevailing genres

by listening to audio samples from a representative cluster of artists. In structuring their

understanding of genres through user comments and discourse online, The Echo Nest's

map of genre space changes daily as bands and genres come into and out of perceived

relevance. As principal engineer Glenn McDonald describes a blog post entitled "How

We Understand Music Genres":

> The calculations and machinations with which we build these genres involve
> layers upon layers upon layers of data-collection and synthesis, and a carefully
> considered (and mercifully manageable) amount of editorial guidance. For
> example, we decide what to do with naming variants like "nu soul" and "neo
> soul" (we went with "neo"), and whether we have enough data for the computers
> to produce a substantial and satisfyingly distinct body of music for any given

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[50] As one example, see "The Edge of Moombahton," accessed April 20, 2017,
https://open.spotify.com/user/particledetector/playlist/2144Dc9dz8S3JodT7qYoFs.
[51] "Every Noise at Once," accessed December 5, 2016,
http://everynoise.com/engenremap.html.

thing, such as "indie folk" (yes), "sertanejo" (yes), or "ziglibithy" (no, not yet). We almost never make up genres, but we could. With great power comes great responsibility. The approach allows us (or our customers) to seed, and then organically grow, a new genre or style from essentially any inspiration.[52]

For instance, the Moombahton genre was institutionalized by Dave Nada's track by the same name.[53] Nada slowed Afrojack's Dutch house remix of Silvio Ecomo and Chuckie's track "Moombah" from 130 BPM to 108 BPM, thereby creating a heavier track with a denser bass line and hard percussion hits that evoke reggaeton's slower tempo and "dembow riddims."[54] The track blends the house and reggaeton genres by merging the slowed down, reggaeton drum kit rhythms with the synthesizer raves and schematic form of builds and drops in house music. However, the Echo Nest's map of the Moombahton genre today demonstrates its interpretive distribution. Between representative artists like Major Lazer, DJ Sliink, Bassanovva, and Chong X, it is difficult to interpret coherence strictly through this blend of musical features.[55] McDonald writes that Moombahton is debatable compared to a genre like comedy, which has a high level of intersubjective

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[52] Glenn McDonald, "How We Understand Music Genres," The Echo Nest Blog, accessed December 5, 2016, http://blog.echonest.com/post/52385283599/how-we-understand-music-genres.

[53] Puja Patel, "Hot New Sound: Moombahton Goes Boom!" Spin Magazine, accessed December 5, 2016, http://www.spin.com/2011/07/hot-new-sound-moombahton-goes-boom/.

[54] Jamaican DJ Shabba Ranks was highly influential in the spread of dembow with his 1991 track "Dem Bow." "Dem Bow" translates as "They Bow," which references submitting to the man, or to Western influence. Reggaeton is centered around transnational transformations, demonstrated by these rhythms from Jamaican dancehall music. See Wayne Marshall, "Dembow: A Loop History," Red Bull Music Academy, accessed December 5, 2016, http://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2013/07/dembow-a-loop-history.

[55] "Every Noise at Once: Moombahton," accessed December 11, 2016, http://everynoise.com/engenremap-moombahton.html.

agreement in terms of classifying the component works under that genre.[56] Nada currently appears less influential in the genre's map than Major Lazer, who has come to represent the genre's ideals through listener data. Furthermore, some of the artists in Moombahton's cluster do not even recognize their own music as performing this genre. Yet, interpreters familiar with Nada's work can hear elements of the genre in a variety of different musical texts, and participate in this classification through metadata.

Likely metadata for The Echo Nest's map can be found through platforms like SoundCloud, Spotify, and Reddit. These interfaces evidence how genres continually develop through user comments and discussion boards. On SoundCloud, for instance, users enact texts through paratextual tags like "Moombahton" that advance such a way of classifying their content. Or, on Reddit's "Moombahton" page, users post links to songs that they interpret through the Moombahton genre.[57] These pages present an eclectic mixture of tracks; yet, elements of "Moombahton" can be traced in each of these tracks in differing capacities. One such track that appears on the Reddit page is "Queen Elizabeth" by Cheat Codes. Cheat Codes is an electronic trio of DJ's whose music can be characterized as a mixture of EDM, tropical house, and trap music. The track has an underlying electronic "dembow riddim" ostinato, a tempo around 108 BPM, and a similar overall sound of experimenting with genres that may establish the connection to "Moombahton" for the listener. One could assert almost any musical connection to the genre through these attributes, as users enact texts through the platform's paratexts in

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[56] McDonald, "Music Genres."
[57] "Moombahton," accessed December 11, 2016, https://www.reddit.com/r/moombahton.

establishing a musical connection to the "Moombahton" genre. The Moombahton genre fluctuates unpredictably through these platforms, as individual listeners interpret genres in a variety of ways in participating in their communal understanding.

These interfaces are but one way that The Echo Nest exploits listener interpretation through paratexts in structuring music's metadata. Classifying a text through discourse surrounding a genre like Moombahton relies on cultural norms of taste in organizing the content of the text around its relevant attributes. As genres fluctuate with listener interpretation online, so does the metadata structuring the experience of browsing these genre playlists. As such, interpreting music in Spotify through paratexts surrounding such culturally-based categories of genre is the result of accumulating inputs from various human, technological, and algorithmic mediators into informational metadata about a musical text. There are many dimensions to the metadata that structure Spotify's selection of paratexts to frame interpretation, as this metadata is constantly in flux with the ongoing interactions between humans and technology. Any presentation of music through paratexts in Spotify communicates only a select subset of metadata, the whole of which represents the vast multiplicities of musical connections available to potentially structure the listening experience.

In *Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen in an Age of Musical Plenty* (2016), Ben Ratliff emphasizes that, in an era characterized by ready access to musical abundance in the cloud, the ways we listen to music could be "every bit as important to

its history and evolution as what the composer intends when writing it."[58] Expanding

ways of classifying and listening to attributes in music beyond album compilations and

more traditional notions of genre brings more ways of engaging in musical connectivity

to the fore. As Ratliff describes:

> It is up to you to come up with reasons for engaging as a listener that can
> encompass Beethoven and Bach as well as Beyoncé, Hank Williams, John
> Coltrane, Drake, Björk, Arvo Pärt, Umm Kulthum, and the Beatles. They don't all
> come from one tradition, and their principles of form are different. They're not all
> standing on one sheerly musical plane.[59]

To cite a few of Ratliff's examples, listening to music under notions of "repetition" may

lead one to draw connections between, Rihanna, James Brown, and Steve Reich;[60]

themes of "sadness" may be traced in a mixture of tracks, from The Who's "Young Man

Blues," to Grateful Dead's "Dark Star" and Miley Cyrus's "Party in the U.S.A."[61]

Paratexts in Spotify are one way of drawing out these connections between disparate

artists, genres, and album compilations that may shape the listener's experience of music.

Spotify advances playlist paratexts as generalized frameworks for manipulating the

listener's interpretation of particular texts, but at the same time, each listener's unique

engagement with these individual texts in turn embodies how this general frame might be

musically meaningful.

By way of conclusion, I tie together the case studies explored in this paper

through one final observation. Musical texts embody certain dialectic tensions between

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[58] Ben Ratliff, *Every Song Ever: Twenty Ways to Listen in an Age of Musical Plenty*
(New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), 4.
[59] Ratliff, *Every Song*, 8-9.
[60] Ratliff, *Every Song*, 9.
[61] Ratliff, *Every Song*, 101-109.

generality and particularity, and configurations of paratexts help to endow and draw out

certain of these tensions that shape our understanding of any given presentation of

them.[62] The title of a musical text implies a certain general content that exists in dialectic

tension with each of its particular instantiations; the oeuvre of a composer may frame a

general trajectory of individual works that each component in turn embodies; an album or

playlist compilation represents a general unity framing the interconnections expressed

[62] Indeed, Adorno is rather insightful in his explorations of several such dialectic tensions
through the canon of Western art music. For instance, in "Criteria for New Music" (1959)
Adorno theorizes a certain dialectic tension between generals and particulars, as the
individual works that comprise the historical progression of art music in turn are
meaningful through their embodiment of this universal whole: "the traditional formal
categories of musical language and their abstract silhouettes… should be transformed to
the point where they come into agreement with the new language of music in the force
field of the works. This is possible because musical material itself is not natural material,
nothing physical that remains constantly in itself, but something historical. Meaning is
history that has migrated into music." (160) However, one must be careful to read
Adorno's own mediation of his theory through his attempts to justify personal value
judgments as to the superiority of certain types of music over others: "in an all too clear-
cut antithesis between now and then, it could be said that traditional music asked how
music was to be objectified in the aesthetic phenomenon, whereas new music… asks how
an objectively determined musical shape can acquire meaning… The element of
universality, without which musical meaning would be almost inconceivable, stands
opposed to the bad universality of musical types." (158-161) In "The Culture Industry:
Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (1944) Adorno and Horkheimer accuse the industry
of infecting all music with sameness, characterizing popular music as fundamentally
lacking in this dialectic: "Not only are hit songs, stars, and soap operas cyclically
recurrent and rigidly invariable types, but the specific content… only appears to change.
The details are interchangeable… ready-made clichés to be slotted in anywhere; they
never do anything more than fulfill the purpose allotted them in the overall plan." (125)
Popular music for Adorno gives way to mere permutation of stock phrases that gives the
illusion of both immediate universality (authentic coherence) and absolute singularity
(mere nominal identity). However, the employment of stock phrases in popular music
involves a dialectic between them. One would be hard-pressed to deny all such tensions
in popular musical texts. Especially as mediated by paratexts that provide certain general
frameworks for musical texts as described above, popular music cannot be objectively
qualified as inherently lacking in this dialectic as compared to Western art music.

through individual texts; and musical genres represent general sets of features that rely on evolving instantiations by individual texts comprising its membership for definition. There are many degrees of generality and particularity that shape any instantiation of a musical text, and paratexts provide a framework for navigating these tensions through the attributes in the text.

These case studies have highlighted ways in which certain agents hold a cultural power to frame individual texts through these generalities in communicating them through paratexts. In the Dover score and the Winston transcriptions, this power is bottlenecked through the select network of agents responsible for music's dissemination through these score compilations. Through paratexts like the preface to Winston's score, or through ordering strategies advancing the communication of Debussy's texts as musical works, a certain amount of this framing power is attributed to authorial intent. While such notions of authorial intent exist in Spotify through album and artist paratexts, the overall loosening of the relationship between text and paratext in digital music affords the listener's participation in certain other ways of framing file streams through paratexts. However, despite the growing agency of the listener to participate in such acts of creation through Internet technology, a disproportionate amount of this framing power in Spotify is delegated to the network of technologies and employees of the streaming service. Digital music signals a shift in the cultural power of paratexts, as the power to frame the particular through its dialectic tensions with the general shifts from the artists and record companies to those service networks managing their content. As more users engage with music through data in the cloud, ways of aggregating texts through generalities may

51

become increasingly diverse and fluid. And although common enculturation may structure the patterned engagements with music through paratexts that frame growing listener data, it is ultimately individual listeners who will navigate for themselves the unique sets of musical and extra-musical parameters in musical texts that shape their meaningful experiences of music.

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